

## Public Safety Alert!

April 7, 2020  
Osage County, Missouri  
Susan Long  
Health Department

This is a recorded message. This is not a personal phone call to you.

Good afternoon. This is Susan Long with the Osage County Health Department in Linn, MO. I have the current update on the COVID-19 event in Osage County for you. I closed the first two cases as complete. Both were very compliant with their isolation as were their contacts. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> case from Saturday will be closed tomorrow as his test results took almost 2 weeks for results to be reported. Both he and his household quarantined immediately after he was notified of his exposure in another county to a confirmed case there. Yes, he and his contacts will have completed 14 days of quarantine when I close the case. The contacts have remained well. Our 4<sup>th</sup> case has community-acquired COVID-19. I could not relate his case to another known case. His symptoms luckily are very mild. We have no idea on when or where or from whom he contracted the disease. He identified 5 contacts all of whom were called and are quarantined at home as is he. Community acquired disease is what I had worried about the most and is the reason for the stay at home order for Osage County and now, for the entire state. This results from people who didn't know they were sick and were out in public or those who were mildly sick and still went out in public or those who were sick and knew it and still went out.

The stay at home order was put in place for Osage County on Friday and the Governor put a state-wide stay at home order in place effective yesterday. Neither order singled out any individual, group, business or entity. The orders are designed to protect everyone from the COVID-19 virus and slow the spread so that we don't experience a collapse of our health care system. We knew this wouldn't be easy on anyone and, YES, I'm following the rules too. I don't like the restrictions either, but I care about the health and safety and well-being of myself, my family and friends and that of everyone in Osage County. The thing to remember is that this isn't about any single person. This is one time that the ENTIRE PLANET has a common enemy and we all have to do our part to defeat this enemy. The sooner we ALL do what we are being asked to do, the sooner this gets over.

I want to thank the extremely large majority of folks who are taking this seriously and doing what they need to do whether following the stay at home order and staying at home or going to work in what is identified as an essential business when they are scared of this virus also. There are lots of heroes in this county besides our first responders. There are over 300 nurses who live in this county who are going to work every day. There are people keeping things stocked so you can eat and get essentials. There are daycares staying open and caring for the children of those considered essential such as health care workers so they can go to work and take care of their patients who need them. There are still emergencies going on in the county and these are still being responded to. We have people who are volunteering to help out others who can't get out and we have people who are now sewing cloth facemasks to help out. Lots and lots of doing the right thing. Thank you to those citizens who are providing support to the county!

This is National Public Health Week. I want to take the time to recognize the health department staff because they have been too busy to take the time to be recognized. Everyone has been working some extremely long hours. My love, my admiration and my respect go out to this staff: Tessa Wright, RN, Kim Sallin, RN, Elisha Rogers, Dianna Schubert, Vicki Strickland, RD and Toni Wieberg. This remarkable group of women normally make up about the equivalent of 3 full time employees. Each of them are helping out whether in their normal area of health department operations or in some area not considered previously in their job description. They've done this with grace and dignity and without complaining and they've sacrificed family time in order to get the job done at the health department. They might be just as nervous about this as you, but they don't let it show. They are the Osage County Health Department. Ladies, I salute you and every single other local public health department employee in this state and country. Thank you for your time.